



**Avengers make historic visit to Wake Island**

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**Yuma Rugby falls 35-19 in Glendale**

**... page 8**



**The savings so far...**

Federal returns: \$508,831  
State returns: \$14,595  
Prep fee savings: \$26,361  
Returns filed: 225

Serving Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona



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Jan. 22, 2009

**Yuma NCO killed in motorcycle accident**

A Yuma-based Marine was killed Jan. 13 when he lost control of his motorcycle on Highway 86 near Salton City, Calif.

Cpl. Daniel G. Kirkpatrick, 29, a legal clerk with Marine Wing Support Squadron 371 since December 2008, was riding a Suzuki GSXR 1000 motorcycle when the accident occurred at approximately 8:15 p.m.

According to Officer Dan Alvarez of the California Highway Patrol, Kirkpatrick was riding on one wheel at excessive speeds when he lost control of his motorcycle and failed to navigate a turn, tumbling approximately 40 feet off the road.

Kirkpatrick was wearing a helmet.

Formerly serving as a legal clerk at Twentynine Palms, Calif., Kirkpatrick served in Iraq with 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion in 2005.

He enlisted in the Marine Corps in May 2003 from Vancouver, Wash.

# HAIL to the CHIEF

## Obama vows not to waver in America’s defense

**Jim Garamone**  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – President Barack Obama pledged a “prudent use” of military power as the nation works toward “ushering in a new era of peace” in his inaugural address to the nation Tuesday.

“Our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, the tempering qualities of humility and restraint,” he said from the west side of the Capitol here after taking the oath of office as the 44th president. An estimated 2 million people crowded the National Mall and surrounding area to hear his address.

The use of these principles will allow America to develop greater understanding of other nations and greater cooperation against common threats from them, he said.

“We will begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people, and forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan,” Obama said. “With old friends and former foes, we’ll work tirelessly to lessen the nuclear threat, and roll back the specter of a warming planet.”

Obama said Americans will not apologize for their way of life, nor waver in its defense.

“And for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken; you cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you,” he said.

America is a country of doers and risk-takers; it is an immigrant



Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo

Barack Obama is sworn in as the 44th president of the United States by Chief Justice of the United States John G. Roberts Jr. in Washington, D.C., Tuesday.

**see CHIEF page 2**

## W. praises troops in farewell speech

**Jim Garamone**  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Former president George W. Bush singled out military members for their selfless service and cited his administration’s accomplishments over the past eight years during his farewell address to the nation.

America owes a debt of gratitude to all its citizens who volunteer to defend the nation in this time of danger, Bush said Jan. 15 from the White House.

“I have cherished meeting these selfless patriots and their families,” he said. “And to all our men and women in uniform listening tonight: There has been no higher honor than serving as your commander in chief.”

Bush delivered the country’s best wishes to his successor Barack Obama and his family, calling the inauguration of the first African-American president a chance for the

world to see the vitality of American democracy.

“This is a moment of hope and pride for our whole nation,” the president said.

Bush remarked on the central event of his presidency—the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that killed 3,000 Americans.

“I remember standing in the rubble of the World Trade Center three days later, surrounded by rescuers who had been working around the clock,” he said. “I remember talking to brave souls who charged through smoke-filled corridors at the Pentagon and to husbands and wives whose loved ones became heroes aboard Flight 93.”

For most Americans, life was able to return to normal, but Bush’s never did.

“Every morning, I received a briefing on the threats to our nation,” he said. “And I vowed to do everything in my power to keep us safe.”

Bush spoke of the accomplishments that grew out of 9/11, in-



Photo by Technical Sgt. Craig Clapper

Former President George W. Bush and his wife Laura Bush wave to a crowd of more than 1,000 people gathered at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Tuesday, to wish them a fond farewell before their final departure aboard Air Force One.

cluding the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, the transformation of the military and improved cooperation among intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

“Our nation is equipped with new tools to monitor the terrorists’ movements, freeze their finances

and break up their plots,” he said. “And with strong allies at our side, we have taken the fight to the terrorists and those who support them.”

Soon after the 9/11 attacks, coalition forces went into Afghanistan to

**see FAREWELL page 4**

## Obama aims to shape military for 21st century

**John K. Kruzel**  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – As President Barack Obama assumes the role of commander in chief, one of the items on his list of priorities is to shape the U.S. military for the 21st century.

His plan, outlined on his Web site [www.change.gov](http://www.change.gov), includes further increasing the size of the military especially in specialties dealing with counterinsurgency.

The president has said that America’s greatest military asset is the men and women who wear the uniform of the U.S. armed forces.

“When we do send our men and women into harm’s way, we must also clearly define the mission, prescribe concrete political and military objectives, seek out the advice of our military commanders, evaluate the intelligence, plan accordingly, and ensure that our troops have the resources, support, and equipment they need to protect themselves and

**see OBAMA page 4**

## Post 9/11 GI Bill: new brief helps station Marines decide if it’s best for them

**Cpl. M. Daniel Sanchez**  
Desert Warrior Staff

The station education center is offering a monthly brief to help service members decide which education benefits plan best fits their academic goals.

The brief focuses on explaining the differences between the Post 9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2008 or “New GI Bill,” as it is commonly referred to by Marines, and the Montgomery GI Bill.

“There has been such an influx of interest in the new Montgomery GI bill, and not just active duty, but spouses and dependents also,” said Kim Baars, station education services officer.

“The class was put together so those eligible to use them can make

an educated choice on which one to use.”

The next class is scheduled for Feb. 3 and will also answer commonly asked and situation-specific questions, said Cindy Harris, education services specialist who will present the brief.

“Most of the confusion is about transferring benefits to dependents,” said Harris. “A lot of people think they can transfer them right away. They don’t understand there are requirements that go along with that.”

Harris was referring to the requirement that calls service members to serve or have served on active duty for at least six years and sign on for an additional four years of service before they can transfer the education benefits to their dependents.

Marines also think they will receive Basic Allowance for Housing for taking college courses, regardless of how they take classes and the number of credits they are enrolled for, said Harris.

“If they are taking classes online, they won’t qualify for BAH with

the new bill,” said Harris.

Service members must also be enrolled in school more than half time, which traditional universities and colleges consider more than six credit hours per semester, to receive the housing allowance, she added.

Harris also encourages Marines interested in attending to bring their specific educational goals to the brief to find out what plan would most benefit them.

The more information they have about what they want to do with their education the better, said Harris.

“They are going to want to consider if they plan on taking classes through distance learning, if they’re going to school more than half time and consider how much the tuition is for their school,” she added.

**see GI BILL page 4**



# Navy shapes up with new short-term extension policy

Cpl. Laura A. Mapes  
Desert Warrior Staff

After achieving high retention and low attrition rates recently, the Navy is now tightening its belt, and stabilizing its force by denying most short-term extensions, which took effect Jan. 9.

According to Navy Administrative Message 0007/09, sailors who fail three or more physical fitness assessments in four years, fail to get selected for a rating within the first six months of the Perform to Serve program's start date or are in overmanned job fields will no longer be granted a

short-term extensions of enlistment.

However, these policy changes only apply to certain rates for both active duty and activated reserve sailors.

This policy change may affect any of the station's active duty hospital corpsman with 14 or more years of service, which is overmanned by 171.8 to 259 percent. It may also affect activated reserve hospital corpsman with less than six years of service, which is overmanned at 116 percent, and those between 10-14 years of service at 133 percent.

Active duty sailors in the information technology field with more than 20 years of service are overmanned by 204.5 percent. Activated reserve

sailors with 14-20 years of service are overmanned at 134 percent and those with more than 20 years of service are overmanned by 143 percent. None of these rates will be granted short-term extensions.

Active duty boatswain's mates with six or more years of service will also be affected by the policy change or activated reserve sailors with six or less years or 10 or more years.

However, exceptions for extensions may be granted to those who need to obtain maternity care benefits for a pregnant sailor or sailor's wife and those who need to obtain obligated service required to change duty stations or extensions associated with initial entry training.

The program also urges commanding officers to meticulously review extension requests to ensure the validity of each for program and career management reasons.

"I think it is a great idea and a good way for the Navy to begin downsizing," said Petty Officer 3rd Class George Keebler, hospital corpsman on station.

Extension requests, guidelines, procedures and answers to frequently asked questions can be found at [www.npc.navy.mil/careerinfo/enlisted-careerprogression](http://www.npc.navy.mil/careerinfo/enlisted-careerprogression).

For more information and a full list of the job fields affected, contact Senior Chief Petty Officer Joseph Ragonese, enlisted career progression specialist at 901-874-2499.

# Marine band provides inaugural pomp and circumstance

Samantha L. Quigley  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Not only is it fitting that the "President's Own" U.S. Marine Band played "Hail to the Chief" during the Tuesday inauguration ceremonies, it's tradition.

"The U.S. Marine Band was created by an act of Congress signed by President John Adams on July 11, 1798," said Master Gunnery Sgt. D. Michael Ressler, the band's historian and 34-year member.

The law called for 32 drummers and fifers to be part of the Marine Corps. "The President's Own"—dubbed such by President Thomas Jefferson—now includes approximately 130 members, five officers, a drum major and 22 full-time professional support staff.

Besides the U.S. Marine Band, "The President's Own" also encompasses the Marine Chamber Orchestra and the Marine Chamber Ensembles. They perform regularly at the White House and conduct more than 500 public performances across the nation each year.

But the road to such prestige is a long one. "The band moved to Washington, D.C., in 1800 when the Capitol moved there, and we performed our first concert in Washington on

Aug. 21, 1800," Ressler said. "We were involved in events celebrating Thomas Jefferson's inaugural in 1801, the first inaugural held in Washington, D.C., and have been a part of every inaugural since then."

For the inauguration, however, everything old was new again. As in the past, the band played two traditional inauguration pieces honoring the first and third presidents, "Washington's Grand March" and "Jefferson's March," respectively, as well as "Hail to the Chief."

Paying homage to the history being made that day, an additional song was performed that made its debut in 1861.

"This year, the band will perform a march written in 1861 by former Marine Band Director Francis Scala titled, 'President Lincoln's Inaugural March,'" Ressler said Friday. "The Marine Band premiered this march at President Lincoln's first inaugural in 1861.

"I believe that this will be only the second time that this music has been performed at an inaugural ceremony," he added.

Ressler said inauguration days are always long and challenging, but the band cheerfully accepts the responsibility and sees it as an honor and a privilege.

"There is no better demonstration of our mission than our participation in inaugural events," he said. "Our inaugural history dates back to 1801, and we look forward to renewing this tradition every four years."

Capt. Michelle A. Rakers, one of the band's two assistant directors, knows all too well the challenges and the pride of participating in an inauguration with "The President's Own." This was be her third inauguration since joining the band in 1998.

"It is a tremendous honor to be involved in such a groundbreaking historic event for our nation this year," she said. "As professional musicians, we will always have a certain amount of nerves involved in any performance ... because we always want to do our best."

Since practice makes perfect and helps calm nerves, practices were frequent at the Marine Barracks Annex in Washington where the band is headquartered.

Because of the significance of the inaugural parade, and the fact that the band's marching unit for the parade is so much larger than usual, the band did more "field drills," or marching rehearsals, Rakers said.

The band's role began before Inauguration Day, however. The Marine Chamber Orchestra performed at the opening ceremony on Sunday at the Lincoln Memorial as well as two inaugural balls that night.

"It remains to be seen what the turnout may be for this year's inauguration," Rakers said last week. "But it seems as though the city is preparing for something that will remain in our memories for sometime as ... an event of far-reaching historical significance."

## CHIEF ... from page 1

country where each generation worked hard to provide for the next, he said.

"For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life," Obama said. "For us, they toiled in sweatshops and settled the West, endured the lash of the whip and plowed the hard earth.

"For us, they fought and died in places like Concord and Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sahn," he continued. "Time and again, these men and women struggled and sacrificed and worked till their hands were raw so that we might live a better life. They saw America as bigger than the sum of our individual ambitions, greater than all the differences of birth or wealth or faction."

Americans today must continue this journey, he said. It is time for hard decisions and a time of change.

"Our time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions, that time has surely passed," he said. "Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America."

Obama rejected the idea that the nation has to choose between its safety and its ideals.

"Our Founding Fathers — faced with perils that we can scarcely imagine — drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man, a charter expanded by the blood of generations. Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expedience's sake."

In the United States, all languages are spoken, all religions are practiced, and all good people are welcomed, he said.

"And because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace," he said.

Obama reached out to the nations of the world in this speech. He told them that America "is a friend of each nation, and every man, woman and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and that we are ready to lead once more."

He also spoke to the Muslim world, saying America seeks a new way forward, based on mutual interest and respect.

"As we consider the road that unfolds before

us, we remember with humble gratitude those brave Americans who, at this very hour, patrol far-off deserts and distant mountains," the president said. "They have something to tell us, just as the fallen heroes who lie in Arlington [National Cemetery] whisper through the ages. We honor them not only because they are guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the spirit of service; a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves."

He called on all Americans to shoulder that burden of service. He said it is the faith and determination of the American people upon which this nation relies.

"Greatness is never a given. It must be earned," he said. "Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted — for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame."

The faith and determination of Americans can serve the nation well in a time rife with challenges.

"Our nation is at war against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred," the president said.

"Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age."

Americans have lost their homes, their jobs, their businesses, and health care is too costly, he said. Schools are failing too many, and the American energy policy plays into the hands of the nation's enemies.

"These are the indicators of crisis, subject to data and statistics," he said.

These are disturbing, but more disturbing is a sapping of confidence and the fear that with this decline the next generation must lower its sights, he said.



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Chad J. McNeeley

President Barack Obama waves to the crowd at the conclusion of his inaugural address in Washington, D.C., Tuesday.

"Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real," the president said. "They are serious, and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America: They will be met."

While the challenges of this age are new, the values which have seen the country through in the past will best serve the nation, Obama said.

"Honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism — these things are old, but these things are true," he said.

America must return to these truths, he said.

"What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility — a recognition on the part of every American that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world, duties that we do not

grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task," Obama said.

"This is the price and the promise of citizenship," he said. "This is the source of our confidence, the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny."

If Americans seize this responsibility, then the challenges will be surmounted, he said.

"Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations," Obama said.

## DESERT WARRIOR

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On their final approach to Wake Island on Jan. 8, pilots Capt. Chris Maloney, left, and Capt. Chris Kocab prepare to land a KC-130 Hercules cargo plane carrying an advance maintenance crew from Marine Attack Squadron 211.



Photos by Gunnery Sgt. Bill Lisbon

A crumbling bunker serves as a testament to the Japanese's hold on Wake Island from 1942-1945. Approximately 100 U.S. and Japanese historical structures from bunkers to gun placements remain on the island.

# HALLOWED GROUND

## Avengers' history reawakened

**Gunnery Sgt. Bill Lisbon**  
Desert Warrior Staff

WAKE ISLAND – More than 67 years ago, the forebearers of one Yuma-based squadron faced impossible odds on this remote Pacific atoll as swells of Japanese troops dashed against the jagged coral beach.

While the battle—a 20th century Thermopylae—ended in defeat, its gains included highly decorated heroes and a legacy few military units can reflect upon.

Even for Marines with the squadron today, few get to revisit its symbolic birthplace and walk the ground once stained with the blood of its inaugural ranks.

Yet on Jan. 8-10, approximately 60 men and women from Marine

Attack Squadron 211 retook the island during a stop en route to Iwakuni, Japan, and a deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

“This place is hallowed ground to this squadron,” said Lt. Col. Vance L. Cryer, the squadron’s commanding officer.

Although small groups of Marines from VMA-211 have visited the island in recent years, the last time a force this size—including its commanding officer, most of its pilots and eight of its Harriers—set foot here was in 1995.

The island’s current inhabitants, a trio of Air Force personnel and more than two dozen U.S. civilian caretakers from the Chugach Support Services, Inc., welcomed the Wake Island Avengers as honored guests.

After a reception in the air

field’s terminal, where VMA-211 Marines could visit a modest museum of Wake Island relics, Marines were treated to a tour of the island that ended near the site of Marine Fighter Squadron 211’s last stand on Dec. 23, 1941.

“I could almost visualize Japanese storming the beaches,” said Cpl. Anthony Burton, flight equipment technician. “It’s really motivating to see the history. A new lance corporal that puts on the patch doesn’t see the history of one that takes a trip here.”

Others, like Staff Sgt. Rogelio Gomez who has served with the squadron since 1997 and stopped here briefly years ago, likened returning to the island as a Wake Island Avenger to a religious pilgrimage.

“This is our birthplace,” said Gomez.



Sgt. Christopher Peek, Marine Attack Squadron 211 airframes mechanic, watches as pilots and crew prepare AV-8B Harriers for departure from Wake Island on Jan. 10.



Staff Sgt. Rogelio Gomez, Marine Attack Squadron 211 airframes maintenance chief who has been with the squadron since 1997, observes other Avengers direct an AV-8B Harrier pilot to a parking spot shortly after landing on Wake Island Jan. 8.

Shortly after landing on Wake Island, Jan. 8, Marines from Marine Attack Squadron 211 get a firsthand look at the remote Pacific atoll’s coral beaches where waves of a Japanese invasion force landed in 1941 only to be met by fierce resistance from Marine defenders, including some from Marine Fighter Squadron 211.



A memorial to the defenders of Wake Island stands near the command post of Maj. James Devereux, who lead the defense of the island from Dec. 8-23, 1941.



FAREWELL ... from page 1

eliminate the safe havens from which al-Qaida terrorists planned, trained for and financed the attacks.

“Afghanistan has gone from a nation where the Taliban harbored al-Qaida and stoned women in the streets to a young democracy that is fighting terror and encouraging girls to go to school,” Bush said.

U.S. forces also participated in providing freedom to millions of Iraqis who lived under a brutal dictatorship. The country was once a sworn enemy of America, but is now “an Arab democracy at the heart of the Middle East and a friend of the United States,” the president said.

Bush admitted that there is legitimate debate about many of his decisions.

“But there can be little debate about the results,” he said. “America has gone more than seven years without another terrorist attack on our soil. This is a tribute to those who toil day and night to keep us safe—law enforcement officers, intelligence analysts, homeland security and diplomatic personnel, and the men and women of the United States armed forces.”

The president said the battles in Iraq and Afghanistan are part of a larger ideological conflict between two radically differing visions of the future.

“Under one, a small band of fanatics demands total obedience to an oppressive ideology, condemns women to subservience and marks unbelievers for murder,” he said. “The other system is based on the conviction that freedom is the universal gift of Almighty God and that liberty and justice light the path to peace.”

Advancing the belief in freedom and justice is the only way for America to defend itself, Bush said.

“When people live in freedom, they do not willingly choose leaders who pursue campaigns of terror,” he said. “When people have hope in the future, they will not cede their lives to violence and extremism.”

He may have done some things differently, Bush said.

“Yet I have always acted with the best interests of our country in mind,” he said. “I have followed my conscience and done what I thought was right. You may not agree with some tough decisions I have made. But I hope you can agree that I was willing to make the tough decisions.”

The president said terrorism remains the greatest threat to the United States.

“Our enemies are patient and determined to strike again,” he said. “America did nothing to seek or de-

serve this conflict. But we have been given solemn responsibilities, and we must meet them. We must resist complacency. We must keep our resolve. And we must never let down our guard.”

America must continue to engage with the nations of the world and reject isolationism and protectionism, he said. Retreating would only invite danger.

“In the 21st century, security and prosperity at home depend on the expansion of liberty abroad,” he said. “If America does not lead the cause of freedom, that cause will not be led.”

Bush stressed that America must maintain its moral clarity in the future.

“I have often spoken to you about good and evil, and this has made some uncomfortable,” he said. “But good and evil are present in this world, and between the two there can be no compromise. Murdering the innocent to advance an ideology is wrong every time, everywhere. Freeing people from oppression and despair is eternally right.

“This nation must continue to speak out for justice and truth. We must always be willing to act in their defense and to advance the cause of peace,” the president said.

Even in tough times, Bush remains optimistic because he has faith in Americans.

He spoke of Staff Sgt. Aubrey McDade, who charged into an ambush in Iraq and rescued three of his fellow Marines, and of Dr. Bill Krissoff, a surgeon from California.

“His son Nathan, a Marine, gave his life in Iraq,” Bush said. “When I met Dr. Krissoff and his family, he delivered some surprising news: He told me he wanted to join the Navy Medical Corps in honor of his son.”

Krissoff was 60 years old—18 years above the age limit—but his petition for a waiver was granted.

“For the past year he has trained in battlefield medicine,” the president said. Now a lieutenant commander, he soon will deploy to Iraq where he will help save America’s wounded warriors and uphold the legacy of his fallen son.

“In citizens like these, we see the best of our country—resilient and hopeful, caring and strong,” the president said. “These virtues give me an unshakable faith in America. We have faced danger and trial, and there is more ahead. But with the courage of our people and confidence in our ideals, this great nation will never tire, never falter, and never fail.”

OBAMA ... from page 1

fulfill their mission,” he told the Chicago Foreign Affairs Council in April 2007.

One of the stated goals of Obama and Vice President Joe Biden is to “invest in a 21st century military.” To this end, the new administration laid out the following focal points on its Web site:

- Rebuild the military for 21st century tasks: Obama and Biden plan to build up special operations forces, civil affairs, information operations and other units and capabilities that remain in chronic short supply; to invest in foreign language training, cultural awareness, and human intelligence and other needed counterinsurgency and stabilization skill sets; and to create a more robust capacity to train, equip and advise foreign security forces so allies are better prepared to confront mutual threats.
- Expand to meet military needs on the ground: Obama and Biden support plans to increase the size of the Army by 65,000 soldiers and the Marine Corps by 27,000 to help units retrain and re-equip properly between deployments and decrease the strain on military families.
- Leadership from the top: Obama and Biden plan to inspire a new generation of Americans to serve their country, whether it be in local communities in such roles as teachers or first responders, or serving in the military to keep the nation free and safe.
- Lighten the burdens on troops and their families: The administration plans to create a military families advisory board to provide a conduit for military families’ concerns to be brought to the attention of senior policymakers and the public. They’ve promised to end the “stop-loss” policy that allows service members to be retained beyond the term of their enlistment and to establish predictability in deployments so that active duty and reserve service members know what they can and must expect.

Obama, who’s was inaugurated Tuesday, has not served in military uniform, but his climb to the U.S. presidency culminates a public service career that began in 1997 as a member of the Illinois state senate, where he served three terms, followed by a successful bid for the U.S. Senate in 2004.

As a junior U.S. senator, Obama was a member of the Veterans Affairs Committee. He fought to help veterans get the disability pay they were promised while working to prepare the Veterans Affairs Department for the thousands of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, according to his Web site, [www.change.gov](http://www.change.gov).

Obama’s early exposure to military culture came from the maternal grandparents who helped to raise him during his adolescent years in Honolulu. His grandfather, Stanley Armour Dunham, enlisted in the Army during World War II and served under Gen. George S. Patton while his wife, Madelyn Lee Payne Dunham, worked on a bomber assembly line.

GI BILL ... from page 1

Although the brief is designed to provide Marines with the most recent information available, Harris urges Marines to check back often for updates.

“This is a whole new ball of wax,” said Harris.

There is still information that has not been released, but the brief will cover the most current information available and be updated as it is released, said Harris.

People interested in the new GI Bill can also sign up for e-mail alerts through the Veterans Administration Web site, [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov).

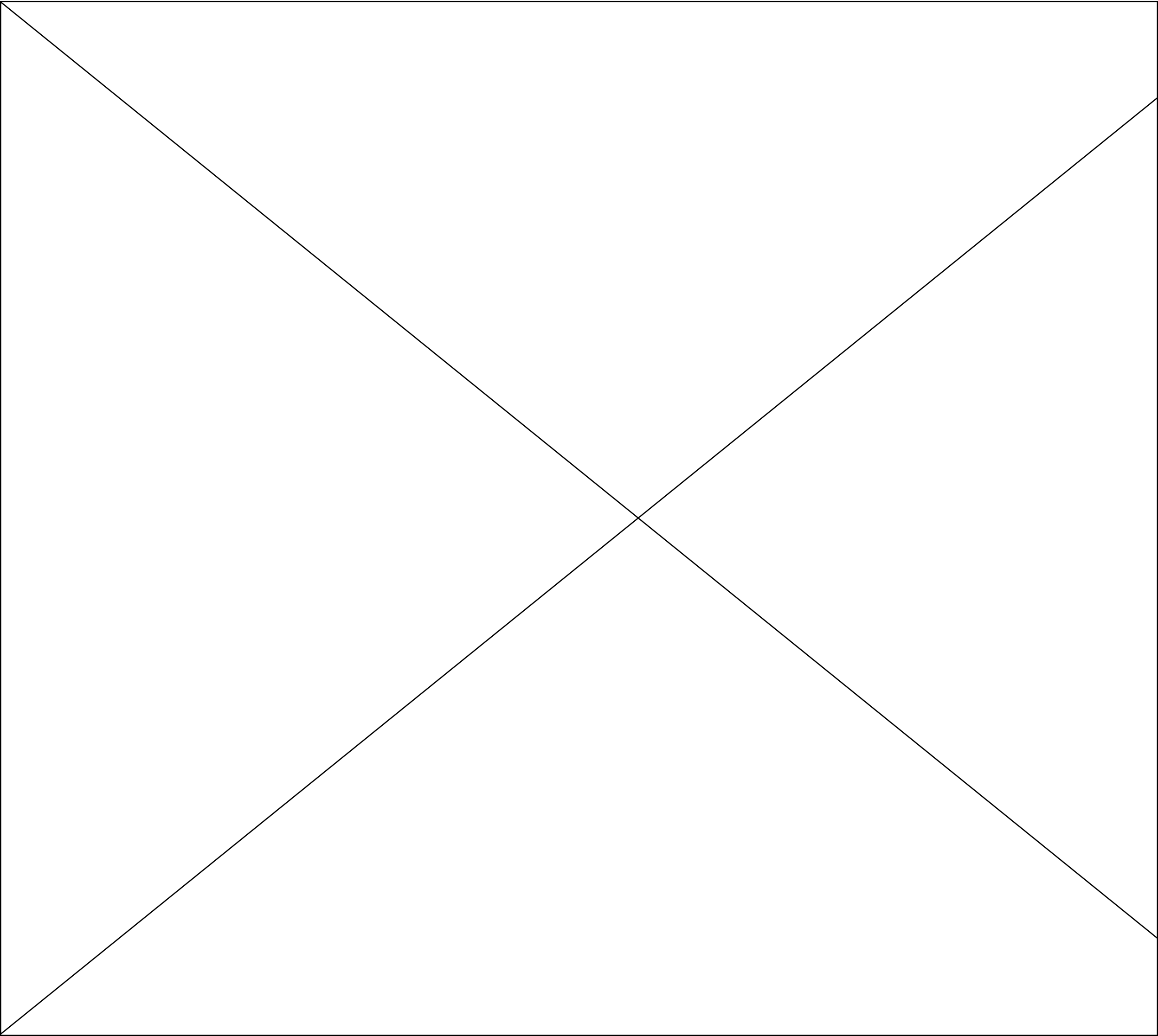
Marines who have talked with Harris about the new benefits plan agree it is something that helped them and will help other Marines decide what works best for them.

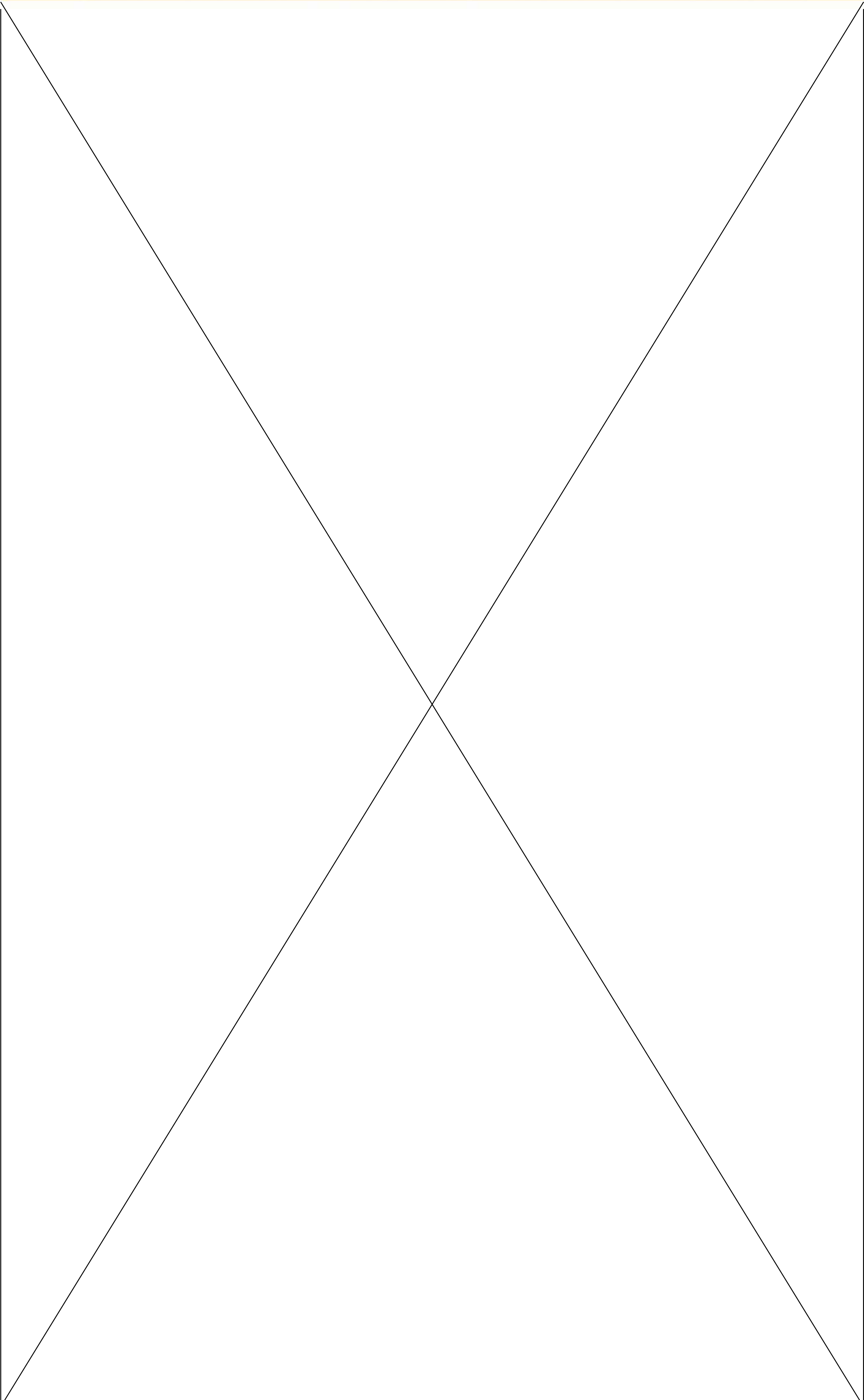
“Everybody pretty much knows how the GI Bill works, but the Post 9/11 is kinda new,” said Cpl. Christopher Fisher, Marine Wing Support Squadron 371 military firefighter. “She explained it great. She also used both of them in different scenarios to show which one of them would benefit more.”

Knowing which bill is best for each Marines’ situation is important, said Harris.

“It’s important because it may determine what college they will be able to go to,” she said.

The briefs are slated to go the first Tuesday of each month at 2 p.m. in the education center, room 108. To sign up for a brief, or make an individual appointment, Marines can contact Harris at 928-269-3589.







# AT EASE

## Public Notice

The Department of the Navy will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the basing of the Marine Corps F-35B Joint Strike Fighter on the West Coast. The EIS will address the potential environmental consequences that may result from the basing and operating F-35B aircraft at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar, California and MCAS Yuma, Arizona. The F-35B would replace the aging AV-8B and F/A-18 A/C/D aircraft currently based at these air stations. The proposed action would involve basing up to 182 F-35B aircraft in 10 active-duty squadrons, a reserve squadron, and an Operational Testing and Evaluation squadron at MCAS Miramar and MCAS Yuma. The EIS will evaluate a total of five action alternatives representing a range of split-basing options, as well as the No-Action alternative.

The Department of the Navy will be holding public scoping meetings that will help identify environmental issues and community concerns with respect to this proposed action. Meetings will follow an open house format with Department of the Navy representatives available at different informational displays to describe the proposal, EIS approach, and National Environmental Policy Act process. There will be no formal presentations; but opportunities to comment will be available at the meetings. Please plan to attend **at your convenience anytime between 5:00 pm and 9:00 pm**. The open house meeting will be held at the following locations:

Tuesday, February 3, 2009	Miramar, Mira Mesa Branch Library 8405 New Salem St., San Diego, California
Wednesday, February 4, 2009	Gila Ridge High School 7151 E 24th St., Yuma, Arizona

If you are unable to attend the meetings, please visit our website for information regarding the proposal at: [www.usmcJSFwest.com](http://www.usmcJSFwest.com). Please submit all comments by February 17, 2009 to ensure their consideration in the EIS analysis. Please submit your comments at the scoping meetings, on the website, or by mail to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, California 92132-5190  
Attn: JSF West EIS Project Manager



**Free tax preparation at the tax center**

**Located in building 852**

**Open to active duty, dependents and retirees**

**Call 928-269-3277**

**for more information or appointments**

## News to Use

### Blood drive at the station gym

The Branch Medical Clinic is holding a blood drive at the station gym Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Attendees can have their blood tested on site and indicate whether they wish to donate. Donors will remain anonymous and is open to civilians. Military personnel who donate will be on light duty 24 hours after the event.

### W-2s now available online

Electronic W-2 forms for 2008 are now available on myPay at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>. For questions concerning myPay, call 1-888-332-7411. If information posted to your W-2 is incorrect, please contact your servicing pay office or your customer service representative for assistance.

### Official military personnel files now available online

Sailors can access their official military personnel file online, as of Jan. 14. All active duty and reserve personnel with a Bureau of Naval Personnel online account can now view their OMPF through the Web-enabled record review option on the account's main menu page. WERR reduces the time it takes to view an OMPF. Before, a CD had to be requested, taking days or weeks to receive. This provides an electronic service record available to view and validate. Users can also download and print service record documents for personal or professional needs. The Web site to access a BUPERS online account is <https://www.bol.navy.mil>. Sailors will need to use their Common Access Card with the appropriate certificates and a CAC-enabled computer. Documents that have been sent to Navy personnel command within the past few months may still be in the process of being scanned to the permanent record. For additional information, reference Naval Administration Message 011/09.

## In Theaters

**Thursday**  
Nothing Like the Holidays (PG-13)  
7 p.m.

**Friday**  
The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG-13)  
6 p.m.

Cadillac Records (R)  
9 p.m.

**Saturday**  
Four Christmases (PG-13)  
4 p.m.

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas (PG-13)  
7 p.m.

**Sunday**  
The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG-13)  
5 p.m.


**Monday**  
Punisher: War Zone (R)  
5 p.m.

**Tuesday**  
Australia (PG-13)  
7 p.m.

**Wednesday**  
**\*Free admission\***  
Nothing Like the Holidays (PG-13)  
7 p.m.

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE  
Call 928-269-2358 or visit  
<http://www.yuma.usmc-mccs.org/theater.htm>

## MESS HALL MENU



**Weekdays**  
Breakfast: 5:30 - 7:30 a.m.  
Lunch: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Dinner: 4 - 6 p.m.

**Saturday & Sunday**  
Breakfast/Brunch: 9 a.m. to noon  
Dinner: 3 - 5 p.m.

**Prices**  
For military without meal cards  
Breakfast: \$2.30  
Lunch and dinner: \$4.25

HOURS OF OPERATION

**THURS**

**LUNCH:** Beef & Vegetable Soup  
Spaghetti w/ Meat Sauce  
Herbed Baked Chicken  
Garlic Cheese Potatoes  
Club Spinach  
Bread Sticks

**DINNER:** Hungarian Goulash  
w/ Noodles  
Asian BBQ Turkey Roast  
Rice Pilaf  
Vegetable Stir Fry  
Simmered Peas

**FRIDAY**

**LUNCH:** Fish Chowder  
Seafood Platter  
Spicy Beans & Sausage  
Potatoes Au Gratin  
Steamed Rice  
Green Beans

**DINNER:** Braised Beef & Noodles  
Cajun Lightning Chicken  
Scalloped Potatoes  
Southern-style Greens  
Mixed Vegetables

**SATURDAY**

**BRUNCH:** Eggs  
Navy Bean Soup  
Cold Cereals  
Sausage Patties  
Oven-fried Bacon  
... and more

**DINNER:** Mushroom Soup  
Steak Ranchero  
Roast Turkey  
Mashed Potatoes  
Southwestern Rice  
Broccoli

**SUNDAY**

**BRUNCH:** Eggs  
Grilled Ham Slices  
Oven-fried Bacon  
Pancakes / Waffles  
Chicken Sandwich  
... and more

**DINNER:** Navy Bean Soup  
Grilled Steak  
Cajun Baked Fish  
Baked Potato  
Parmesan Rice  
Brussels Sprouts

**MONDAY**

**LUNCH:** Minestrone Soup  
Roast Beef  
White Bean Chicken Chili  
Steamed Rice  
Carrots  
Simmered Peas

**DINNER:** Turkey a la King  
Jerk Pork Loin  
Buttered Egg Noodles  
Islanders Rice  
Broccoli  
Vegetable Blend

**TUESDAY**


**LUNCH:** Potato Soup  
Chili Macaroni  
Fish Vera Cruz  
Grilled Cheese Sandwich  
Spanish Rice  
Tangy Spinach

**DINNER:** Beef Pot Pie  
Bayou Chicken  
Orange Rice  
Cauliflower Combo  
Smothered Squash  
Cheese Drop Biscuits


**WEDNESDAY**

**LUNCH:** Bean w/ Bacon Soup  
Parmesan Basil Chicken  
Pasta Toscano  
Italian Roasted Potatoes  
Cream-style Corn  
French-style Green Beans

**DINNER:** Meatloaf  
Baked Stuffed Fish  
Steamed Rice  
Oven-browned Potatoes  
Mixed Vegetables  
Broccoli



**Events**  
[www.mccsyuma.org](http://www.mccsyuma.org)



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Check out our website @ [mccsyuma.org](http://mccsyuma.org)



ADS

# SPORTS

## Just out of reach: Yuma Rugby falls to Phoenix in second game of season

Lance Cpl. Gregory Aalto  
Desert Warrior Staff

The Yuma Sidewinders Rugby Club (0-2) fell to the Phoenix Rugby Club (2-0) 35-19 Saturday in Glendale, Ariz. Yuma gave up more points during the match than they did the entire 2008 season.

The first 20 minutes of the game was a staunch, defensive battle before Phoenix got on the board with a pair of scores, leaving the game 12-0 at halftime.

“They are a big team, but we are playing with speed and not giving up on any play,” said Jimmy Kirkland, Yuma scrum half.

Phoenix came out gunning at the be-

ginning of the second half, jumping out to a 29-0 lead.

However, Yuma did not give up and scored three times late in the game, including a try as time expired. Despite the last-minute rally, Yuma was unable to close in on Phoenix’s commanding lead.

“They were a real scrappy team, we had to earn every point today,” said Phoenix coach, Bob Pasley.

Yuma will host their third game of the season against the Sin City Irish Rugby Club, (2-0), Saturday at Carver Park in Yuma.

Sin City dominated the Northern Arizona Landshark Rugby Club 75-5 Jan. 10 and won again in Henderson, Nev., Saturday 28-17 against the Tucson Magpies Rugby Club, while Yuma forfeited its first game to Tucson.

“We just couldn’t get enough bodies out there. I really hate to give up games that way,” said Rich Montague, Yuma Sidewinders club president.

Although already two games in, Montague welcomes those with or without previous playing experience to practice and play with the team.

Practices are held at 6:30 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays at Kennedy Park in Yuma.

The team gave up only 31 points in their four games last year, making their points-per-game defense second in the Arizona Rugby Union to the champion Red Mountain Rugby Club.

Yuma heads into the 2009 season coming off its first winning record in at least four years. Last year the team finished a shorter season than usual at 3-1. Between 2004 and 2007 the team went 7-29.



Photos by Lance Cpl. Gregory Aalto

Above, Ngugi Keige, Yuma Sidewinders Rugby Club left wing, tackles a Phoenix Rugby Club player during a regular-season match Saturday in Glendale, Ariz. Left, Jimmy Kirkland, Sidewinder scrum half, attempts to take down a Phoenix player in the same game. Yuma (0-2) lost the game 35-19 after heading to halftime down 12-0. Yuma is hosting a game Saturday at 1 p.m. at Carver Park against the Sin City Irish Rugby Club.